

Dear Friend,

Every 12 minutes, a woman dies from breast cancer. Last year in the United States, there were about 190,000 new cases of breast cancer, and an estimated 40,800 women are expected to die from the disease this year.

Early detection is the best defense. Women should begin self-exams starting at the age of 20 and have clinical breast examinations performed by a health care provider every 3 years. After the age of 40, women should have annual mammograms and clinical breast examinations.

In California, funding for breast cancer treatment is provided for individuals who do not qualify for Medi-Cal or who do not have health insurance. The state budget makes funds available to provide breast cancer treatment to those who can't afford essential services. Even if you think you can't afford it, you should seek medical care.

I encourage you to monitor your health and take steps to protect yourself against this disease.

Sincerely,



JOHAN KLEHS

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Compliments of
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Breast Cancer

*Detection needs
to be followed by
effective treatment*

Basic Facts About Breast Cancer

Breast cancer is the leading cause of death among women aged 40-44 and the leading cause of cancer death in women 15-54. One out of every 8 women in the United States will develop breast cancer in her lifetime.

Approximately 80 percent of women who develop breast cancer have no family history of the disease. All women are at risk, and there are no known causes or cures. More often than not, breast lumps are not cancerous, but all lumps should be examined by a healthcare professional.

Early detection is the best way to beat breast cancer. Mammography and clinical breast examinations have been shown to reduce breast cancer mortality. Yet, only a little over half of the women age 40 and older in California have had a mammogram within the last year.

Most women who found breast cancer in its early stages and received treatment are alive and well 5 years later.

Myths and Facts about the Risk of Developing Breast Cancer

Myth: **Breast cancer is preventable.**
Fact: There is no known way to prevent breast cancer, and the cause of the disease has not been determined. Early detection followed by prompt treatment offers the best chance for surviving breast cancer.

Myth: **Only women get breast cancer.**
Fact: Breast cancer is rare in men, but it does occur in roughly 1,000 men each year. In normal men, small rudiments of breast ducts may be found in the center of the breast, beneath the areola and nipple. The vast majority of breast cancers in men, therefore, arise in this area, rather than in the outer quadrants so commonly affected in women.

Myth: **Only women with known “risk factors” get breast cancer.**
Fact: More than 80 percent of women diagnosed with breast cancer have no identifiable “risk factors.” All women are at risk and risk increases with age.

Myth: **Only women with a family history of breast cancer are at risk.**
Fact: The majority of women with breast cancer have no family history of the disease. A woman whose mother, sister, daughter or grandmother had breast cancer has an increased risk of developing the disease.

Myth: **Breast cancer is contagious.**
Fact: Cancer is not a communicable disease. It results from uncontrolled growth of cells in a person’s own body. These changes cannot affect other people’s cells.

Myth: **Small-breasted women cannot get breast cancer.**
Fact: The amount of breast tissue a woman has does not affect her risk of developing breast cancer.

Myth: **Breast-feeding causes or protects against breast cancer.**
Fact: No studies have shown that breast-feeding causes breast cancer. Some studies have suggested that breast-feeding may reduce a woman’s risk of developing the disease. However, studies are still ongoing on this topic. A woman who breast-feeds her children can still get breast cancer.

Early Detection and Mammography

Why should I have a mammogram?
A mammogram can find breast cancer that is too small for you, your doctor, or your nurse to feel. The American Cancer Society recommends that all women age 40 and older have a mammogram every year. Women in their 40s who are at average risk for breast cancer should also get a mammogram every one to two years. Women who are at high risk of breast cancer should seek expert medical advice about whether to begin mammography before age 40.

What is meant by high and average risk for breast cancer?
Most women are considered to be at average risk for breast cancer. The risk of breast cancer increases with age. There are a number of risk factors that cause a woman to be at high risk for breast cancer, and women should consult a health professional to determine their risk level. Some examples of risk factors are:

- Having a first child after age 30
- Other breast disease
- Family history of breast cancer

How often should I get a mammogram?
The American Cancer Society recommends that all women age 40 and older have a mammogram every year.

Where can I get a mammogram?

- Ask your doctor or nurse
- Ask your local health department or clinic
- Call the Cancer Information Service at 1-800-4-CANCER (1-800-422-6237)
- Call the American Cancer Society at 1-800-ACS-2345 (1-800-227-2345)
- Call the Y-Me National Breast Cancer Organization at 1-800-221-2141 (English) or 1-800-986-9505 (Español)

Important Resources

East Bay Cancer Support Group
1-510-889-8766
<http://www.ebcancersupport.org/>

St. Rose Hospital Breast Care Center
1-510-264-4072
<http://www.strosehospital.org/specialty/breast.html>

American Cancer Society
1-800-ACS-2345
(1-800-227-2345)
<http://www.cancer.org>

Susan G. Komen Breast Cancer Foundation
1-800-I’M-AWARE®
(1-800-462-9273)
<http://www.komen.org>

National Cancer Institute Cancer Information Service
1-800-4-CANCER
(1-800-422-6237)
http://www.cancer.gov/cancer_information/

